

Message Text

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11
ACTION IO-13

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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8495
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 3099

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UN, RQ
SUBJECT: PUERTO RICO AND THE COMMITTEE OF 24 (C-24):
CONVERSATION WITH COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SALIM

1. ON AUGUST 2, GOVERNOR SCRANTON DISCUSSED PUERTO RICO AND THE COMMITTEE OF 24 WITH COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SALIM (TANZANIA). SALIM POINTED OUT THAT THERE ARE FOUR VIABLE OPTIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE OF 24 ON THE SUBJECT OF PUERTO RICO WHICH HE PHRASED AS FOLLOWS:

- (1) POSTPONEMENT ("ADJOURNMENT").
- (2) DISCUSSION OF PUERTO RICO BUT WITH NO SUBSTANTIVE ACTION.
- (3) REAFFIRMATION OF THE COMMITTEE'S 1973 POSITION.
- (4) TAKE SUBSTANTIVE ACTION ON "COLONIALISM ISSUE" AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

2. SALIM SAID THAT AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE HE IS FOR AVOIDING CONFRONTATION THIS YEAR, BUT HE WILL NOT TAKE LEADERSHIP IN THIS. HE BELIEVES THE BEST POSITION FOR THE UNITED STATES AND FOR THE COMMITTEE WOULD BE OPTIONS 2 OR 3. HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT POSTPONEMENT ("ADJOURNMENT") WITHOUT ANY SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION IS LIKELY BECAUSE TO PUT IT THROUGH THIS YEAR WOULD TAKE "SOMETHING LIKE 17 VOTES"

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IN FAVOR, (OVERWHELMING SUPPORT). COMMENT: HE IS PRE-

SUMBALY SAYING THAT THERE IS NO MEANINGFUL MAJORITY FOR SUCH A MOVE AND CONSEQUENTLY NO THIN MAJORITY WHICH COULD STAND THE PRESSURE AGAINST SUCH A MOVE. END COMMENT. HE HOPES THAT THE COMMITTEE WILL NOT TAKE THE FOURTH OPTION, BECAUSE THEN THIS MATTER WOULD GO TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR A DEBATE.

3. SALIM MADE IT CLEAR THAT IF THERE IS A VOTE ON THE "COLONIALISM ISSUE," TANZANIA WOULD NOT CHANGE ITS POSITION BUT WILL CONTINUE TO VOTE FOR SAME "WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING."

FURTHER, HE BELIEVES THAT WHAT HAPPENS AT COLOMBO WILL HAVE AN IMPORTANT AFFECT ON WHAT HAPPENS IN THE COMMITTEE OF 24 WHICH WILL MEET ON PUERTO RICO AFTER COLOMBO, PROBABLY THE LAST WEEK OF AUGUST. HE WILL BE HERE TO CHAIR THE COMMITTEE MEETING, BUT PLANS TO BE AN UTTERLY IMPARTIAL CHAIRMAN, WORKING - IF AT ALL - FOR AN OUTCOME ALONG THE LINES OF NUMBER 2 OR 3 ABOVE.

4. SALIM HIGHLY RECOMMENDS THAT WE TALK AT SOME LENGTH WITH VRAALSEN (NORWAY) ABOUT THIS WHOLE MATTER. HE SAYS THAT VRAALSEN HAS VERY GOOD STANDING WITH THE WHOLE COMMITTEE. SALIM FURTHER SUGGESTS THAT OUR SIDE BE PREPARED WITH LANGUAGE FOR A STATEMENT OR RESOLUTION RE OPTIONS 2 AND 3. COMMENT: USUN BELIEVES THAT SALIM'S STATEMENT THAT "SOMETHING LIKE 17 VOTES" WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR POSTPONEMENT REFERS TO POSTPONEMENT WITHOUT ANY CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO BY THE COMMITTEE RATHER THAN JUST POSTPONEMENT OF ACTION ON A RESOLUTION ON PUERTO RICO. WE REMAIN CONVINCED THAT OUR BEST COURSE IS TO PUSH FOR POSTPONEMENT OF FURTHER CONSIDERATION AFTER THERE HAS BEEN SOME DISCUSSION OF THE MATTER.

6. WE HAVE CONSIDERED THE ADVISABILITY OF A US STATEMENT IN THE COMMITTEE BUT BELIEVE THE DANGER OF BEING DRAGGED INTO AN ARGUMENT ON THE MERITS OF THE COMMITTEE'S CONSIDERATION OF PUERTO RICO -- AN ARGUMENT WE COULD NOT WIN IN THAT FORUM -- OUTWEIGHS THE NEGLIGIBLE POSSIBILITY THAT ANY IMPROVEMENT IN THE VOTING LINEUP ON POSTPONEMENT OR A RESOLUTION MIGHT RESULT. WE STRONGLY CONFIDENTIAL

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RECOMMEND AGAINST ANY US PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMITTEE.

7. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE WE HAVE BEEN IN VERY CLOSE TOUCH WITH VRAALSEN AND WITH THE AUSTRALIAN MISSION DURING THE PAST MONTHS.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: IN CASE WE ARE NOT SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING SIMPLE POSTPONEMENT, GOVERNOR SCRANTON REQUESTS

THAT THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDE USUN ASAP WITH A DRAFT PRESS
STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO PASSAGE OF A RESOLUTION ALONG THE
LINES OF THE 1973 COMMITTEE OF 24 RESOLUTION ON PUERTO RICO,
WHICH DOES NOT RECOMMEND GA ACTION AND THUS HAS NO
FURTHER ADVERSE PROCEDURAL CONSEQUENCES BUT WHICH CONTAINS
OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE. ALSO, HE REQUESTS THAT THE DEPARTMENT
CONSIDER WHAT OPTICAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE 1973 RESOLUTION
WE COULD PROVIDE TO OUR FRIENDS ON THE COMMITTEE WITHOUT
IN ANY WAY IMPLYING US ACQUIESCENCE IN ANY RESOLUTION
TOUCHING ON PUERTO RICO -- WHICH WOULD RENDER IT LESS
OFFENSIVE TO US.
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